THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

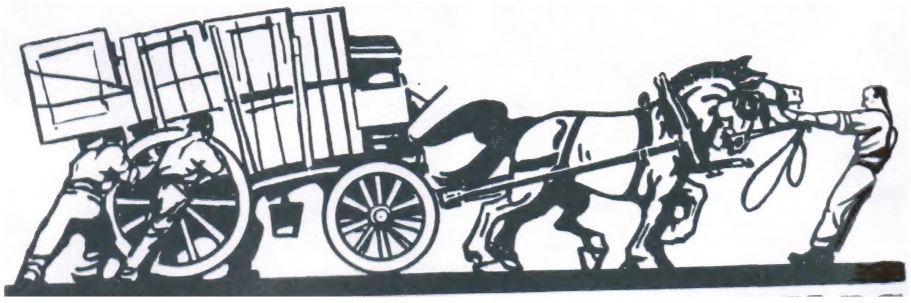
"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

February/March, 2011 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Persistence

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

After 28 years in the Catholic Worker movement, I sometimes get tired of peacework and hospitality. After all, America seems to *always* be at war and never short of people in need. I occasionally yearn to sit out the struggle, to retire, and to squander my days in selfish pursuits. I call these doldrums the "old fart syndrome." One needn't really be elderly to be an old fart. The term refers to an attitude: "I don't care if the river is flowing to a waterfall. No swimming upstream for me. Drifting is just fine."



Edward Hopper

On the other hand, Saint Paul urges us to, "**keep alert with all perseverance**" (Eph 6:18) because, as Saint Matthew reminds us, "**The one who endures to the end will be saved**" (Mt. 24:13). Saint Mark says quitters "**have no root in themselves, and endure for a while; then, when persecution or tribulation arises..., immediately they fall away**" (Mk 4:16-17). Saint Luke is even harsher: "**No one who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Reign of God**" (Lk 9:62). In a more positive vein, Luke also tells us that persistence yields results. A relentless litigant prompts an unjust judge to say, "**Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming**" (Luke 18:4).

Persistence does bear fruit. The campaign to end Apartheid, the struggle to close the bombing range in Vieques, Puerto Rico, and the demonstrations to stop the MX nuclear missile ended in victories. Many of the homeless who seek help at Catholic Worker houses get back on their feet. Some tell us "You saved my life." Just two weeks ago, during a particularly cold vigil against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a man pulled his car over and told us, "I've seen you people here week after week, year after year, and just wanted to stop and tell you how moved I am by your persistence."

Victories are gas in the tank, but, unfortunately, they aren't daily events. You can't sustain a commitment based on them, no matter how dramatic they are in the end. However, you can be moved daily by the witness of others. In the same way our little vigil inspired that motorist, I am moved by the persistence and creativity of many other peacemakers.

Ciaron O'Reilly, for example, founding member of the London Catholic Worker, is simply indefatigable. During just two weeks in December, he organized and participated in vigils to free Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, to close military recruiting stations aimed at children, and to call for an end to the war in Afghanistan. Born in 1960, Ciaron has been a peace activist for thirty years, beginning in his

(Continued on Page 2)

Time Capsule

Editor's Note: The following articles are reprinted from the 1946 issues of The Record, *the student magazine of Littleton, New Hampshire's high school. The views expressed by these young writers from a small American town, just after the Second World War, a decade before the civil rights movement, are reprinted here because they represent more progressive thinking than is often heard on talk radio today. We could learn from them.*

Idealism vs. Materialism in Our Foreign Policy

by Winthrop Rowe '47

America has always had a great deal of trouble because Americans present to the world the curious paradox of a people who seem to believe in ideals, yet constantly betray those ideals for materialistic reasons. We are a nation of people whose home affairs are governed by idealism (regard for the common man) but whose foreign policy is usually made by the very men with whom they struggle for economic power.

The case of Theodore Roosevelt is a classic example. He struggled at home to ease the grip that the great barons of industry held on the economic life of the nation. Yet, abroad, he grabbed islands and carried the "Big Stick" with a right good will. The only ones to profit by his imperialism were the sugar trusts—the people he had sworn to destroy. The ideals of self-government and equality were set aside by T.R's gallivantings. We, who have always believed that the South Americans should develop free of foreign control, pushed them around without a twinge of conscience. The big fruit companies dictated our policy, and for the benefit of a few

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Persistence

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native Australia and continuing around the world. On New Years Day, 1991, he joined Sue Frankel, Bill Streit, and Mona Cole in a "Swords into Plowshares" protest at the Griffiss Air Force Base in upstate New York, where they "disarmed" a B-52 bomber, for which Ciaron served nearly a year in jail. In 1998, he joined the Jabiluka Plowshares in disabling uranium mining equipment in Australia, and, in 2006, he was part of the Pitstop Plowshares which prevented a US warplane from continuing on to Iraq. Wikileaks revealed that, after an Irish jury acquitted Ciaron and his co-defendants, the US State Department all but abandoned hope of future Irish collaboration with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ciaron not only perseveres, but does so from the unpopular perspective of a pacifist/anarchist who opposes war and abortion. At the 1990 Haley House Catholic Worker gathering in Boston, Ciaron stood up on a soap box (literally) and initiated a vigorous discussion of the seamless garment respect for life position. He persists today. He is no shooting star.

Another remarkable inspiration is Frances Crowe of Northampton, Massachusetts. Born in 1919, a mother of three, Frances became a peace activist in 1945 after the US bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. She was a leader in the Society of Friends and offered counselling on conscientious objection to more than 2,000 prospective draftees during the Vietnam War. She has been arrested many times for nonviolent civil disobedience.

In 1991, she was tried for blocking the entrance to the Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee, Massachusetts where over 100,000 US troops were being deployed to Saudi Arabia for the invasion of Iraq. At her jury trial, the prosecutor, who was aware that the civil disobedience was preceded by weeks of "legal" vigils, asked Frances when she first joined the protests at Westover. She thought for a minute and then said, "Sometime in 1962."

Frances was arrested in 2009 with three other women who protested at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant and, most recently, at the White House on December 16, 2010 with Veterans for Peace. At 92-years-old she not only refuses to quit protesting, but also explores new ways to live more simply with respect for the environment. She defines the phrase "young at heart."

Brian Kavanagh

Ciaron and Frances are not alone either. They are joined by Eyad Bournat who has led nonviolent protests every Friday for five years against the Israeli wall which marks the seizure of half of his Palestinian village of Bil'in. On New Year's Eve, he helped organize a large demonstration against the wall, after which a young Palestinian woman died from massive injestion of Israeli teargas. Despite the Israeli use of teargas, gunfire, late night raids, beatings, and jail, Eyad persists.

Mairead Maguire, of Belfast, Northern Ireland, is another unstoppable champion of peace. She could easily have taken the money and run after winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977, but refused to do so. She was shot in the leg by Israeli soldiers during a protest in Bil'in. While lying on the ground afterwards, she had the wherewithal to gave an interview focused on the Palestinian struggle for justice.

Right here in Worcester, Michael True, an English professor, who went to jail to oppose the Vietnam War, has never stopped working for peace. At an age when many people bask in the Florida sun, Michael helped found Worcester's Center for Nonviolent Solutions. He is an anchor for Worcester's long-standing anti-war vigil. He always apologizes when he is prevented by illness from attending.

These activists, and many others like them, dispel any temptation I have to become an old fart. I not only ride their coattails, but hope I can shine enough for others to ride on mine. They remind me how much joyful persistence depends on community. Ω

I never despair, because the political powers that be are not running the universe. They may be running the United States, they may be running the military, they may be running even the world, but hey are not running the universe, they are not running the human heart. A higher power is yet to be heard in this regard, and I'm not sure that we haven't already heard. We just haven't been listening. I still believe in the nonviolent Jesus and the basic human goodness present in all of us.

Martin Sheen

Common Dreams, 10/25/10

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The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community
52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089
Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Breaking the Silence

by David Maher

Editor's Note: The author is a US Marine Corps veteran. Breaking the Silence is an organization of Israeli veterans who anonymously expose military abuses, most notably Israeli atrocities during the 2009 invasion of the Gaza Strip.

During March of 2009, I traveled to Israel to join a delegation, organized by Christian Peacemaker Teams, to learn about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We traveled to East Jerusalem and the West Bank, where we met with Israelis, Palestinians, and representatives of NGOs.

On our final evening, our delegation met with a member of Breaking the Silence,who served in the Israeli Army during the Second Palestinian Uprising in 2000.

Yehuda was 26 years old and attending university. He served his three years in the army, some of that time as a sergeant. Yehuda stood approximately six feet tall, weighed 250 pounds, and had dark, curly hair, glasses, and a confident manner.

We met on the second level of a restaurant across from the Damascus Gate in the Old City. Except for the occasional visit by the waiter, we had the floor to ourselves. Save for a few of our questions, Yehuda spoke uninterrupted for an hour.

At the outset, he said he had no opinion on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, which some Israelis refer to as "disputed territory."

He spoke about being on patrol in Hebron and villages in the West Bank. When his patrol came upon a suspicious package options included: shooting it; calling a bomb squad to pick up the package; asking a Palestinian to pick up the package. The latter was least time consuming and more amusing.

He spoke about stone-throwing Palestinian youths. "They're fast, light, and small, and they disappear into alleyways. To discourage stone throwing, Israelis soldiers would detain a youth and position him at the front of the patrol as a human shield— "Not a single stone was thrown."

He said that if he were indicted, tried, and convicted for what he had done while serving in the Israeli military, quite likely he'd spend the rest of his life in prison.

I asked Yehuda, "How can this cycle,

Dean Roher

this pattern of systemic and institutionalized harassment of Palestinians, violations of human rights, be broken if no one is held accountable?"

He replied, "This is the conundrum: If you speak out, testify against your commanders, you do prison time as well."

I pointed out what seemed to be a contradiction: He and others were concerned enough to share their experiences, but not so concerned to name names. He looked at me and said that perhaps I knew that, but for certain exceptions, all Israeli citizens were obligated to serve in the Israeli Defense Force: three years for men and two years for women, with one month a year reserve duty for some number of additional years. Yehuda would not say whether he was serving his reserve time or not.

Twice during the evening, Yehuda reminded us that crimes against humanity were occurring in Darfur and the world has done nothing.

Now, we were walking through the restaurant, our meeting effectively over—thank yous and good-byes said.

I told Yehuda that it was a slippery slope to say, "My atrocity is not as bad as other atrocities."

Yehuda stopped, turned, and faced me. With an air of confidence and indifference, he said that's not the point he was trying to make.

I said, "I'm speaking about human rights."

Yehuda turned and exited the restaurant into the pedestrian traffic of Jerusalem. Ω

The Local Cost of US Military Aid to Israel

In August 2007, the United States and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining a ten-year (FY 2009-2018) U.S. military aid package to Israel totaling $30 billion. Through its illegal 42-year military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, Israel misuses US weapons in violation of US law to kill and injure Palestinian civilians, destroy Palestinian civilian infrastructure, blockade the Gaza Strip, and build illegal settlements in West Bank and East Jerusalem.

How much of the 430 billion will *your* community provide? Is this a good use of your tax dollars? What else could your taxes be used for in your community?

Between 2009 and 2018, the projected amount of tax money from the city of Worcester projected to go to military aid to Israel is $27,895,777.14

This money could instead be spent to provide:

- 339 households per year with affordable housing grants OR
- 463 job seekers per year with green jobs training OR
- 825 children per year with early reading education OR
- 22,591 people per year with primary health care. Ω

Editor's Note: This information was provided by The US Campaign to End the Occupation. To find our how much your community contributes to military aid to Israel and how else that money might be used, go to **www.endtheoccupation.org/section.php?id=323**

Time Capsule

(Continued from Page 1)

big pocketbooks, the U.S. Marines gave a prime example of aggression by conquering, in undeclared war, free and sovereign peoples.

Teddy Roosevelt's foreign policy is not the only case, however, in which we have fallen down on ourselves. F.D.R. also had great economic problems, but unlike his predecessor from the House of Roosevelt, he realized that this nation is not truly sovereign alone, but had duties to other nations which limit its power for evil, yet do not harm, in the least, its powers.... His regime was supposed to have heralded the coming of the good neighbor policy and the end of economic royalism, yet his government was the one that caused bad relations with Mexico by protesting the action of the Mexican government in closing down on the American oil well owners who refused to recognize Mexican labor organizations. With Roosevelt, the Foreign Office received the impetus toward a good policy, but it wasn't acted upon wholly or with good grace. The personnel stuck to the old way of protecting the rich Americans and neglecting the right of poor foreigners. The State Department seemed to have the idea that government was instituted merely to protect property and not human rights....

As long as we refuse to take notice of our duties toward mankind, mankind will refuse to take notice of our rights. Only by sacrificing the right to be stupid and indolent about foreign affairs can we earn the right to live intelligently at home. Only when we sacrifice the right to wage offensive war, can we earn the right to live in peace. If we do not earn these rights we may destroy ourselves and the world, too. These are our ideals and the world's ideals; we should affirm them. We should shout them from the rooftops so that all the world can hear and see that we are no longer a paradox, no longer a nation of hypocrites.

Is This Democracy?

by Lawrence Enderson '47

There are a great many people who think that only they are Americans, and the people of different races are foreigners. They show intolerance and hate towards these so-called foreigners. This causes racial prejudice. There are three specific races of people in the United States, as downcast and foreigners. They are: 1. Negroes, 2. Jews, 3. Japanese.

The Negroes were forced to come as slaves, and not because they wanted to come. They were mistreated, and when given their freedom no one could help them out. This Negro problem exists very largely in the south. The Negroes are not allowed in the same restaurants, movies, schools, and hotels as the white people. This is done for no reason at all except that most white people think that they are better than the Negroes. If a Negro man is seen in a forbidden place he will be beaten and dumped in the river or somewhere else. Therefore the Negro never had a chance to get ahead in the world.

These Negroes have been discriminated against by segregation and many other ways. There have been large race riots in our many cities such as New York, San Francisco, and Detroit. The riot in Detroit was started by a man just bumping into a Negro's car. In this riot a great many Negroes and white people were killed. Most of the people in the white race don't stop to consider that a large number of Negroes fought and died in the last war and many of the preceding wars.

The Japanese problem is seen mostly in the western coast states. There, white people also consider the Japanese as outcasts and lowly people. The Japanese came over here mostly for freedom. When people see the high cheek bones and slanting eyes they immediately say, "He is a stinking Jap." Therefore they can't get jobs. There have been cases where they can't go to the same theaters, restaurants, and hotels where white people go. They can't ride in the same taxis or buses with the whites.

In our recent war, the Japanese used truths in their propaganda about racial hatred in America. Ninety percent of these Japanese are as poor as the Negroes in the south. Money should be appropriated to help them and to educate whites to overcome intolerance.

Last, but not least, we come to the Jewish question. We know quite a bit about these people up here, because [Littleton, NH is where many Jewish families spend their summer vacations]. A large number of people hate Jews, but, if you became acquainted with them, your opinion would change. The only reason the Jews are not liked is due to jealousy. A great many Jews have died in the war.

There have been a great many Negroes, Jews, and Japanese who have given their lives to better this world. Some of the noted Negroes are Booker T. Washington, who founded Tuskegee Institute; George Washington Carver, who invented a large number of uses for peanuts; also Joe Louis, the Heavyweight Champion of the World. Albert Einstein, the greatest Mathematician in the world, and Henry Morgenthau, Jr., the former Secretary of the Treasury, were Jews. As for the Japanese there is Ben Kuroki who served in the U.S. Air Force, and others who have given their lives as guinea pigs to find the causes and cures for tropical diseases.

"Can't ya read signs?" *by Bill Mauldin*

Many of the people in the United States want to convert most of the other countries into a democracy, but we cannot and will not be able to do this until we have one in our own country. This will not happen until all racial prejudice has ceased.

Prejudice & World Peace

by Marion MacIver '47

In this country we practice Democracy, or so we call it. What is Democracy? To me Democracy is the four freedoms [freedom from want and fear, freedom of speech and worship], and the belief that all men regardless of race, color, or creed are created equal. But are they in the eyes of millions of other Americans? No! They are considered "the scum of the earth."

These people are also a part of America. At the present, Americans are making an effort to introduce Democracy into other countries of the world. We had better begin working at home, before we criticize the methods of other countries.

In many southern states, Negroes have their own side of the street to walk on and they must resort to the back seat in all busses.

While traveling through many southern states, shocking conditions in slum districts can be witnessed, but, if these people were not prevented from progressing, our country would not be faced with such acute, social problems that now confront her.

Clare Boothe Luce stated in one of her recent articles that, if we were to blind ourselves to the fact that the skin of a Negro is dark, and measure them by the services which they render to mankind, we would find it the same as that of ourselves. Color of skin is an unjust cause for this prejudice.

I believe in order to prevent wars we must kill all racial prejudice roots before they begin to grow and spread again; we must all cooperate to wipe out one of the most outstanding enemies figuring in the destruction of world peace.

Countrymen, bend and invoke
Mercy for us blasphemers,
For we spat on these marvelous folk,
Nations of darers and dreamers,
Scions of singers and seers,
Our peers and more than our peers,
"Rabble and Refuse" we name them
And "scum o' the earth" to shame them.

From "Scum o' the Earth"
by Robert Schauffler Ω

Prayers for Robert

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

Over the years, I have written several articles about my friend Robert Douglas, a death row inmate serving time for crimes he says he did not commit.

Raised in a housing project in northern Philadelphia, Robert, by his own account, was "no angel." As a young adult, he was imprisoned eleven months for stabbing a man, during an altercation about a watch. But jail and the birth of his son chastened him. Upon his release, he worked two jobs and was disciplined in reporting to his probation officer. In July 1981, he was arrested for a murder and robbery that occurred seven months apart. The arrest shocked him. He was so confident of exoneration, he refused a plea bargain.

Attorneys familiar with Robert's case describe it as absurdly unjust. The prosecutor was unethical, the defense attorney underpaid and ill-prepared. Subpoenas for Robert's character witnesses were never served. The one "eyewitness" to the murder, a man with a criminal record, never testified in court. Instead, his damning testimony was read to the jury. Three witnesses for the prosecution later recanted their testimony. The judge and an assistant prosecutor have since been disbarred.

About 8 years ago, Pennsylvania's Court of Common Appeals vacated Robert's death sentence, but denied him a new trial. His attorneys appealed the latter decision and await a ruling from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Meanwhile, Robert remained on death row, chronicling the miscarriage of justice he has endured. Although the details of his case dominated our correspondence, he also wrote of other topics — books, sports, US policy in Iraq, the accomplishments of his daughter.

Last fall, Robert, who is 6'1", reported he was unintentionally losing weight. One hundred and seventy-five pounds in October, he had dropped to 143 pounds by December.

"Seems like I can't swallow anything," he wrote in a frantic letter, dated December 20th, asking me to help him get to an "outside hospital." The letter prompted me to call his attorney and Johanna Berrigan of the House of Grace Catholic Worker in Philadelphia. She connected me to an nurse and inmate advocate working in the Pennsylvania prison system.

His attorney tells me Robert was taken to an "outside" hospital. As of this writing, I have no news on his condition. My last letter to him remains unanswered. The silence is worrisome.

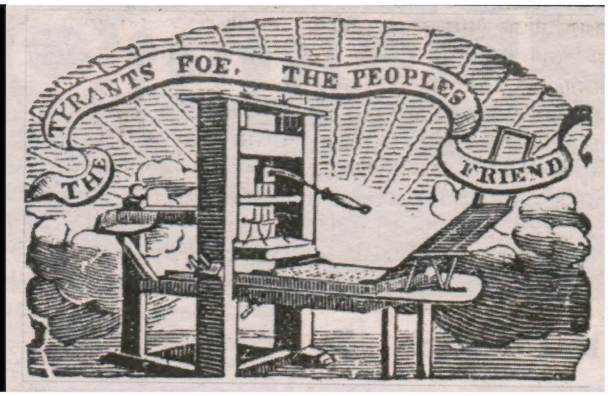
We have been writing to one another for over a decade. What began as an act of charity on my heart has become a source of inspiration. Robert is one of the most determined human beings, I know. For more than half his life, he has fought for what he has yet to receive — a fair trial. He has kept faith throughout. Every letter, whether reporting good or bad news, begins with a prayer: "Allah-Akbar. Love and Peace be unto you." His obsessive re-examination of his case, used to irk me. Now I see his persistence as a reflection of his conviction that the truth, if repeated often enough, really will set him free.

I saved his letters, fancying I would someday use them to write a brilliant investigative piece that would result in a new trial and his liberation. It's now possible my fighting friend might anonymously fizzle away. Death might come before his day in court. This would be hugely unjust.

So I ask that you pray for him and send letters. Years ago, in a letter thanking my oldest son for their correspondence, he wrote: "I was once in a deep, deep hole. God enabled you to give me a ladder to climb out." Robert needs a ladder now. Ω

Robert T. Douglas AY3357
Box 244
Collegeville, PA 19426-0244

Letters



To the Editors,

Thanks for your latest issue. Wishing you all the best for this Advent and Christmas time, in the hope all these horrors of strife and man's sin will soon cease and a new time really comes which all men actually long for.

Two things—the first, you'll probably know by now, but the Wikileaks editor in chief, Julian Assange, is facing serious charges, and his courage will not be accepted—or what he has done will not go "unpunished" by the powers that be—and his life could also be endangered. So he is a "soldier of conscience" as those in earlier times—maybe even braver—as then it was popular to dissent—whereas now, a lonely outpost.

Mainly, though, despite your "explanation" I have to agree with Father John Wallace. The ordination of Catholic women as priests is not right. That's my gut feeling. Over the last 50 years, as things have become more topsy turvy, some voices cry out for this, but it just doesn't work and never will. Just because too many men, and I include myself, have too often not fulfilled their true role as husbands and fathers and leaders of their families doesn't make putting women in leadership right. And this includes political leadership. Hilary Clinton, while a very smart and savvy politician, will be judged in the end for her fulfillment as wife to Bill and mother to her daughter.

Anyway, two wrongs don't make a right. If men are not coming to the fore, then women will, but that still doesn't make it right. As you know, in a true marriage, the husband is the head and this is also for the Church, Catholic or otherwise.

Brian Trapwell
Farmington, Pennsylvania

Dear Scott & Claire,

Thanks for the December/January issue of the Catholic Radical. While every article was—as usual—quite interesting, we were most impressed by your response to Father Wallace's letter. Straightforward, factual, and nonconfrontational support of your belief regarding the ordination of women, it should be included in any course on nonviolent conflict transformation.

Thank you for such wise teaching!

Salaam/Shalom.

Paul and Katja Sander-Rehm
Greenville, New York

Editor's Note: We heard from four of our readers who disagreed with us on the ordination of women. Interestingly, three of the critics are women, one of whom was so upset she asked to be taken off our mailing list.

Patriarchal definitions of the roles of men and women remain very strong in some quarters. We suspect that gender equality will only gain widespread acceptance when it becomes clear that women's liberation improves rather than weakens relationships. This process is accelerated by mixed gender groups which reject patriarchy and grow in mutual love and respect. As Peter Maurin knew so well, eloquent rhetoric is only meaningful when backed up by personal example.

Dear Scott, Claire, and Catholic Workers,

I received *The Catholic Radical* for December-January 2010-2011. Always an excellent read.

I hope you are saving all the "Mason Street Musings." Some are funny, some sad, some touching, some informative, and the like. One hundred and fifty or so of the best ones would make an excellent book. This one in *TCR* was excellent.

What Bill Quigley is saying on page 5 [title], without coming right out and saying it, is that America has been transformed into a Third World Country. Might as well say it.

The prison letter on page 6 tells a true story. It is worse here. But virtually no one cares. Least of all the lazy, dysfunctional courts. They strain out gnats and swallow camels. The Texas prison system operates exactly the same as the Nazis operated one prison: Dachau. See: **Legacies of Dachau**, by Harold Marcuse, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Abu Ghraib—page 1. The person who set up Abu Ghraib was O. Lane McCotter, the former Director of the [Texas Department of Criminal Justice] TDCJ! The Texas prison system. Now, what does that tell you? There have been/are worse things in this country than Abu Ghraib. Where do you think former Texas Governor George W. Bush got his experience? And then sent O.Lane McCotter to Iraq? Why couldn't the hopeless mainstream media ever make the connection? Our candy ass, MSM Corporate media.

Page 6. Assuming, for argument only, you join the Knights of Columbus, you do so with eyes open. If at some later date you decide by not having women members "they are excluding half of God's creation," you would be better served by leaving via the same door you came in. I have supported married priests for 40 years! Because the Vatican's policy is prima facie duplicitous. They accept married priests from other faiths. The Catholic church operates a "sanctified patriarchy" and everyone knows it. Martin Luther did not like what he saw, the Church would not listen, and so he took care of business, as you know. And got married in the process! My reading of 1 Timothy chapter 3 specifically authorizes married priests/bishops, but the Vatican writes the rules, and they say—No.

Re: "What's the Big Deal About Jewish Settlements?" Virtually everyone fails to go to the core of the matter. Did—or did not—God give the Jews a large slice of land—more than they now have—in perpetuity? "Forever." It is really an up or down question, yes or no. Concomitantly, did He tell them to kill **all** the men, women, and children they found occupying the promised land? ref. Deuteronomy, Joshua, etc. Well. If you say yes, then whatever the Jews do in/on that land is A-OK. If you say no, you dispute biblical authority and history.

...I see the state of Texas got caught executing yet another **innocent** prisoner,

Claude Jones. Very bad national publicity for the TDCJ, but they do not care. By my count that makes six bona fide innocent prisoners the TDCJ has murdered since 1982. Serial killers. The surprising thing is that the MSM uttered a peep.

I strongly suspect either you and/or Claire have at some time read Charles Dickens' masterpiece, **Bleak House**. It seems to me America is a now a nation of Mrs. Jellybys: Americans like to feel indignant about injustice that takes place a long way from home and is beyond our control. Demonize historical figures and politicians in faraway countries. Let us now sail close to the wind.

As you both know, all our real problems are here.

Robert J. Zani
Tennessee Colony, Texas

Editor's Note: If we believed the Roman Catholic Church was fundamentally flawed, we would be compelled by conscience to leave it, but, since we believe the Church offers us the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, theology, and the lives of the saints, our hearts draw us to remain and try to improve its witness.

Regarding the Promised Land, Genesis sets the boundaries from the Suez Canal all the way to central Iraq. Deuteronomy calls for genocide. The reason we are not bound by these texts today is that most Jews and Christians are not fundamentalists. The Scriptures are understood contextually, with God's promise to the Jewish people contingent on ethical behavior as defined by the prophets. It is not a carte blanche. Taking the Bible as a whole, we must faithfully reject genocide, slavery, polygamy, and other untenable ancient practices. Also, it is important to realize that the sacred texts of various religions have competing narratives which can advance justice or promote division. It is one of the most delicate struggles of our time to balance respect for religions with respect for universal human rights.

Dear Scott,

If you are interested in joining another running club, here's a North Medford application.... Many NMC members from your area are very busy members. The club has Tuesday P.M. races, many near Fitchburg.

...I've been a North Medford Club member since 1970 or so, and a Catholic Worker subscriber since I was a student at Boston College School of Theological Knowledge. I loved reading Ammon Hennessy and Dorothy Day back then. I heard Dorothy in 1973 or so in Boston.

Over the years I've become a big doubter and a pessimist, but running brings it all back and in focus.

I see you run on Wednesday and Thursday, so you can add Tuesdays to your list. That's enough. Don't run when you don't feel like it. And don't overdo it. Perhaps there are better things to do on those racing days. And, as I say to my wife, I save myself so I can race another day.

Dan Coffey
Beverly Farms, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: The Schaeffer-Duffys have a family membership in the Central Mass Striders. CMS sponsors many local races, including weekly runs, regardless of the weather, on Monday nights and Saturday mornings. For more information go to: **www.cmsrun.org**

The time is always right to do right.

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Catholic Worker Calendar

February 7, 21 & March 7, 21 —Mass: Join us in prayer and song at 7:30 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

March 13—Tour de Patrick: Please don one of our stylish, shamrock/peace t-shirts and join us for the 11 A.M. start of Worcester's first Saint Patrick's Day Parade 5K road race. We'll give the shirts free to the first runners who contact us at theresecw2@gmail.com or 508 753-3588. The race will be run on Park Avenue, beginning and ending at Elm Park. The course is flat and will be lined with thousands of spectators awaiting the parade, which begins at noon. To register for the race go to: **www.tourdepatrick.com**

February 17 & March 17—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer and fast for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Clark University on Main Street in Worcester.

February 4 & March 4 —Vigil Against War & Abortion: Join us for a vigil starting at the military recruiting station on Park Avenue and ending across from Planned Parenthood on Pleasant Street in Worcester. Noon to 1 P.M.

For more information, please call: 508 753-3588
or email theresecw2@gmail.com

Mason Street Musings

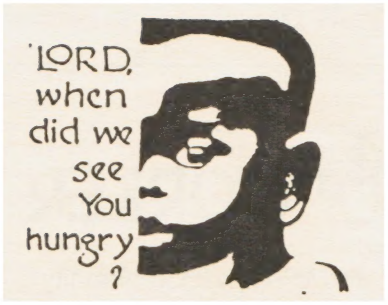
Expect the unexpected. You'd think, after sixteen years with the Mason Street Irregulars, I would have mastered this one rule of Catholic Worker life. As Scott reminded me many years ago, "You want to make God laugh? Tell Him your plans."

My plans for the three days following Christmas were pretty simple. With Claire, Scott, and the family away in New Hampshire, and Dave in the uppah Midwest, vacationing with friends and relatives, I was going to stay at Mason Street to assure that the house ran like the proverbial well-oiled machine.

The first day, Sunday, ran so smoothly that I began to believe that I could actually pull this off. Our three guests, Rao, Fouad, and "Samantha," sat around the table, ate Christmas leftovers, and talked like old friends. We watched TV, read, and relaxed, and all of us were in bed by ten.

Monday was a different story, a completely different story. The first snowstorm of the season had blown in overnight, leaving a foot of swirling, drifting snow in its wake. Feeling tired after repeated attempts to remove what the plows then replaced, I ordered a couple of pizzas for supper and waited for them to be delivered.

Around ten o'clock, just as I was preparing to call it a day, Rao ran downstairs and informed me that Samantha was having a "medical crisis." I arrived in her room to find her visibly shaken and in tears. She told me that she felt pressure in chest, was having difficulty breathing, and couldn't stop shaking. She asked to go to the hospital. After calling 911 and filling them in, I went outside to await the first responders. Within two minutes, a fire truck and an ambulance, sirens and strobe lights splitting the night, arrived to take over. In another ten minutes, they had taken Samantha to the hospital. At two o'clock that morning, I was awakened by the sound of the front door opening. Samantha was back, saying amid mighty



yawns that she felt better and would be ready to go after a good night's sleep. Recuperation is quick in these parts!

On Tuesday evening, as our friend David Maher served supper, Samantha left the table amidst more tears. As I followed her to her room, I heard her on her cell phone. "The cops are coming," she said. I could only stammer an uncertain, "What?" I subsequently discovered that Samantha had "borrowed" one of our kitchen knives that morning before setting off to visit a friend. While there, she had threatened to hurt herself. Her friend had rightly called the police, who appeared at the house to transport Samantha to the Emergency Mental Health unit of a local hospital.

"Well," said a visibly relieved Rao, "that'll be it for the night." But that was not to be. Several hours later, Samantha reappeared, bearing instructions to visit her psychiatrist in the morning for a re-evaluation of her meds!

Each of us has plans. Rao, a gregarious, extremely friendly visitor from India, works daily to learn all he can about computers and finance so he can "be a success." Fouad, an Iraqi student, here with the help of the Iraqi Student Project, studies at Clark University and hopes to return to his country to aid in its rebuilding. And Samantha? She's a single mom with more than her share of problems, who hopes eventually to be reunited with her child. Here at 52 Mason Street, our plans are to continue providing housing, food, and support to those who seem to find constant obstacles blocking their paths.

We know your struggles have mirrored the economy's, and that, like us, you're having difficulties making ends meet. This makes us all the more grateful for your help in defraying winter's inevitable costs. We encourage you to write us and continue sharing your thoughts on our work and this newsletter. As you read this, it'll be almost time for the baseball season to begin. Spring must be just around the corner! **Ken**

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
(508) 753-3588 & (508) 753-3089

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